HARDYKNUTE:

K. Hardicanute
198
11630.c.4
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A

FRAGMENT.

BEING THE

First CANTO of an Epick Poem;

WITH

General REMARKS, and NOTES.

Animos in Martia Bella
Versibus exacuit. Hor.

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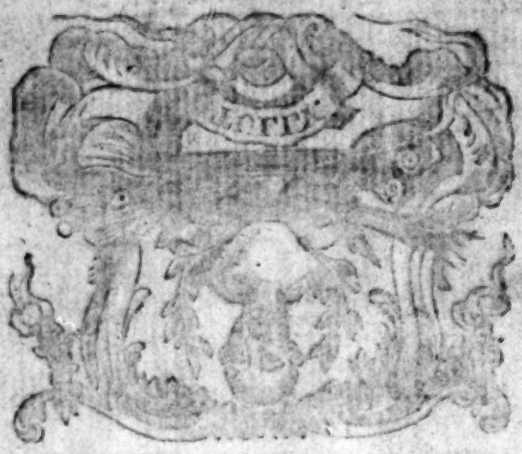

GENERAL REMARKS UPON *HARDYKNUTE.* IN A LETTER to a FRIEND.

SIR,

Have read the Poem which you recommended to my Perusal. What you said of it, and a few broken Passages which you repeated, had rais'd my Curiosity to a very high Pitch, and given me room to think, that it was the Production of a more than ordinary Genius. It fully answers your Description: There is a Grandeur, a Majesty of Sentiment diffus'd thro' the Whole; a true Sublime, which nothing can surpass.

Since I talk of it in this Manner, you will, no doubt, expect that I ſhould fulfil my Promiſe, and write a ſort of critical Diſſertation which may ſerve to point out and illuſtrate its principal Beauties. I will do more, if my Scheme meets with your Approbation; for I perſuade my ſelf, that by pulling off the Mask of Antiquity, which has hitherto conceal'd it from the Eyes of the Publick, I ſhall contribute not a little to the Pleaſure of the Curious. Do not from this imagine, that I propoſe to change the Form of it entirely, and to give it the Air of a modern Piece. *Hardyknute* might poſſibly ſuffer in the moſt able Hands by ſuch an Attempt. Beſides it would be a very needleſs Undertaking; ſince the Language, ſome few Words and Phraſes here and there excepted, is plain old *Engliſh*, ſuch as the Poets here made uſe of in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Time. The chief and almoſt only Alteration that will be neceſſary lies in the Spelling, which is according to the ancient Dialect of *Scotland*. Such Words and Phraſes as have any Obſcurity in them muſt be explain'd in the Margin, or elſe in the Notes upon particular Stanzas.

It may perhaps be expected that before I proceed to my General Remarks upon *Hardyknute*, I ſhould give ſome hiſtorical Account of the Author: But as even his Name is loſt, a Diſquiſition of this Kind, would be to very little purpoſe; and I ſhall not trouble you with any whimſical Conjectures about him. As for the Antiquity of the Poem, it is ſaid to have been written before the Year 1600: But to determine exactly when it came out firſt, might occaſion a difficult, and perhaps, after all the Pains that ſhould be taken, a fruitleſs Enquiry. By the Style, which is plainer, and leſs encumber'd with the Ruſt of Antiquity, than that of the other Poems and Ballads printed in the ſame Collection † with it, one may gueſs it to be of a newer Date than moſt of them.

Whoever reads it muſt immediately perceive that it has all the Air of a Fragment. It ſeems to be no more than the Beginning, or, as it were, the firſt *Canto* of an Heroick Poem. Our Author had at leaſt form'd to himſelf a more extenſive Plan than that which we find executed. Love and the tragical Effects of that unbridled Paſſion, were in all Probability deſign'd to be the chief Ingredient in the

† *Ramſay's Ever-Green.*

the Texture of his Fable. His Exclamation upon the woeful Calamities, which the Beauty of *Fairly Fair*, *Hardyknute*'s Daughter occasioned, evidently points at something of this Kind.

What woeful Woe her Beauty bred!
Woeful to young and old!
Woeful, I trow, to Kyth and Kin,
As Story ever told!

To the same Purpose are the dreadful Insinuations towards the End of the Poem, which seem to intimate nothing less than the Rape of *Fairly Fair*. The short and obscure Episode of the wounded Knight, that we meet with in the Body of the Piece, will furnish me with some Reflections upon this Head.

Great Reason have we to lament, that either the Author did not finish his Poem, according to the Plan which he had laid down, or else that by some Accident or other, we have lost the greatest Part of it: But, without enquiring into what *Hardyknute* originally was, or would have been, had the Author follow'd out his Subject, I shall proceed directly to consider it as it now stands: For even in this Shape we shall find that *Hardyknute* has the most essential Qualities of an Heroic Poem.

The Subject, or the Action here describ'd is extreamly great. A King of *Norway* lands in *Scotland* with a formidable Power, and seems to aim at nothing less than an entire Conquest of the Country. The *Scots* headed by their Prince, and animated by the Valour of their Champion, obtain a compleat Victory over their Enemies, and put them all to the Sword. Here then is a War of the last Importance, where not so much the Glory as the Preservation of a whole Kingdom depends upon the Success of one decisive Battle. Who can help being strongly interested for a People in this Situation, whom Self-defence and the Cause of Liberty, not the wanton Ambition of their Prince, nor the greedy Desire of Spoil leads out into the Field? In a War like this, true Heroism shines with the

the moſt conſpicuous Luſtre; ſince the Greatneſs of all human Actions chiefly depends upon the Greatneſs of the Motive from which they proceed. Hence it will appear, that our Author has choſen an admirable Subject.

PARTICULAR Remarks upon the Characters and Sentiments of this Poem will be more properly diſperſed in the Notes than collected here. I ſhall therefore content my ſelf with making a few general Obſervations in this Place. The firſt Thing I touch upon is the Character of *Hardyknute*, which our Author ſeems to have deſign'd for the Model of a perfect Hero.

There is a Greatneſs in the Whole of his Behaviour, which may be juſtly term'd the true Sublime of Life. His three Sons that accompany him to the War, have each a peculiar Mark of Diſtinction in their Characters; and the two eldeſt are next to himſelf, the moſt conſpicuous Heroes of the Poem. The King of *Scotland* is remarkable for a true Courage, which receives a Tincture from the Majeſty of his Rank; the King of *Norway* for a military Fierceneſs, grounded upon a preſumptuous Conceit of his Power and bodily Strength. We ſhall find, in ſhort, that the Poem, conſidering the Size of it, contains a great Variety of eminent Characters.

Since the Characters are chiefly founded on the Sentiments, it is impoſſible to praiſe the former without extolling the latter at the ſame Time. I hope it will be no difficult Task to prove that our Author's Sentiments are almoſt every where equal to the Greatneſs of his Subject, and frequently not inferior to ſuch as have been long receiv'd with the higheſt Approbation.

I SHALL now beſtow ſome Remarks upon the Manner in which our Author conducts his Fable. Herein the Life and Spirit of Poetry conſiſt. The Subject may be great, and the Characters and Sentiments noble, without the Help of the Muſes. But to reduce every Thing into Action, and, as it were, to breathe a living Soul into the Performance; this can only be the Work of an Author highly ſmitten with the Fury of a poetical Genius. *Homer* is univerally allow'd to have excell'd all others in this Divine Faculty. His *Iliad*, as the great Tranſlator of it juſtly obſerves, is the moſt ſpirited Compoſi-

tion

tion that the World ever saw. Far be it from me to compare *Hardyknute* with the matchless *Iliad*. The former can only be look'd upon as the Specimen, or rather as the Sport of a vigorous Imagination; whereas the latter is a finish'd Production in all Respects. But this I will venture to say, that our Author was undoubtedly blest with a large Portion of the fiery Spirit of *Homer*. Nothing can be more animated than the whole Poem, from the Beginning to the End. His Descriptions are so lively that they seem instantly to create a true Prospect of whatever they represent to us: Nay, such is the Force and Rapidity of his Genius, that it hurries us along to the different Scenes of Action, as fast as they are changed, and makes us the Hearers or Eye-witnesses of all that is said or done.

OUR Author seems to have learn'd from *Homer* of what great Use Speeches are to enliven a Poem of this Kind; since a very considerable Part of *Hardyknute* is taken up with these. As they are all perfectly suitable to the Characters of the Persons, so I doubt not but I shall be able to prove in my Notes, that many of them have Excellencies and Beauties which may be truly said to bear the Stamp of an original Invention.

THIS suggests to me an Observation which I think extremely applicable to the whole Piece. We have Reason to suppose, that our Author was a Man of Letters, and had formed his Taste upon the great Standards of Antiquity. It is highly probable, that he read *Homer* much, and that the Fire of the *Iliad* communicated an additional Force to the natural Warmth of his Genius. Yet however much he may have copied after the Spirit and the characteristic Excellencies of that Divine Writer, I do not find an obvious Theft in his whole Poem, nor indeed a single Passage that can be justly called a direct Imitation of him. He seems rather to have figur'd to himself what *Homer* in his Place would probably have written upon the same Subject, than, like *Virgil*, *Tasso*, and other Epic Poets, to have aim'd at enriching himself with the Spoils of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

THUS

THE Similies in *Hardyknute* are extremely short, as well as extremely few. Our Author is far from having imitated the *Greek* Poet in this reſpect. Perhaps his Reaſon for not doing it might be, that he look'd upon long and frequent Similies, however rich and beautiful in their own Nature, as a Kind of Clog to the Action. It is not my Deſign here to detract from the Praiſe which the moſt able Criticks have thought due to the Similies of *Homer*: His vaſt Knowledge of Things, and his inexhauſtible Fertility of Invention, are both remarkably diſplay'd in them: But if I may honeſtly confeſs what I think of a long Simile that occurs amidſt the Keenneſs and Tranſport which the Fury of the Action raiſes, I can't help ſaying, that I ſometimes wiſh it out of my Way, or would, at leaſt, be glad to find it leſs circumſtantial. Such an impetuous Flood of Poetry, pouring in upon me from a different Quarter, diverts the Tide of my Attention, and thereby ſlackens the Vigour of it. While I trace the Lion to the Sheep-fold, view the dreadful Havock which he makes; and leſt any of the ſtrong Circumſtances which are natural here, ſhould eſcape my Notice, while I obſerve the fearful Conſternation of the Shepherds, I loſe Sight of the Hero and of the Field of Battle; and it coſts me ſome Pains to recover my former Situation.

NOT only are our Author's Similies ſhort, but there is a remarkable Turn of Brevity, which runs thro' the whole Poem, and may juſtly be look'd upon as one of its great and diſtinguiſhing Excellencies. It is amazing to ſee what a deal of Matter is frequently crowded within the narrow Compaſs of a few Lines. Actions follow Speeches, and Speeches Actions with incredible Velocity, and at the ſame Time with ſo much Perſpicuity and Eaſe, that while nothing is ſuperfluous, no material Circumſtance is wanting. Almoſt every Stanza contains ſome glaring Proofs of this judicious Brevity, which our Author delights in: But his beautiful Manner of ruſhing into Speeches at once, without any previous Notice, is the moſt general, as well as the moſt remarkable Effect of it.

I COME next to conſider the Style of *Hardyknute*. Since the Remark which I have juſt made concerns the Language no leſs than

than the Sentiments of the Poem, it would be needleſs to repeat here that our Author chuſes a Brevity of Style. Beſides this, it has all the Qualities of a lofty Diction, ſuch as the Nature of the Subject requir'd. As it never is too high for the Sentiments, being abſolutely free from Bombaſt, ſo it rarely ſinks beneath them. Perſpicuity, Strength and Eaſe, which are beyond doubt the higheſt Perfections of Language, run thro' the Whole, not without a great Mixture of Harmony.

OUR Author's Verſification, which I have reſerv'd for the Subject of my laſt general Remark, has the ſame Form with that of *Chevy-Chaſe*; only *Hardyknute* is divided into Stanzas. This Kind of Verſe, although leſs ſolemn and majeſtic than either blank Verſe or heroick Metre, is nevertheleſs ſuſceptible of great Force and Dignity. Whoever reads *Chevy-Chaſe* and *Hardyknute* muſt needs allow the Truth of this Obſervation. There is a great Variety in our Author's Numbers, [illegible] different Paſſions, Sentiments, Things and Actions [illegible]. His Negligence of Rhime, or rather the [illegible] ſhews for it in ſeveral Places, is, I think, leſs a Fault [illegible] Beauty. It was in ſome ſort aſpiring at the Liberty of Blank Verſe, and may perhaps be conſtrued as a Proof that nothing but the Fetters of the Age in which he liv'd could have ty'd him down to the poetical Drudgery of Rhyme. Muſt it not appear a ſtrange and unaccountable Task for an Author big with heroick Conceptions, and fir'd by the Muſes, to be all the while racking his Brain about the low Jingle of Words? There are indeed ſome Poets ſo peculiarly gifted with the Knack of Rhyme, that it ſeems to coſt them very little Trouble, and to be no manner of Check upon the Flow of their Invention. Such *Moliere* was; ſuch was the *Dryden* of the paſt, and ſuch is now the *Dryden* of the preſent Age: But ſince our Author wanted this Facility, and was nevertheleſs obliged to make the laſt Words of every ſecond and fourth Line chime to one another, thoſe Inaccuracies of Metre which he frequently falls into, are worthy of Excuſe at leaſt, if not worthy of Commendation.

THUS have I finiſh'd my General Reflections upon *Hardyknute*. I might eaſily have ſpun them out to a much greater

length; but I fear'd it would be treſpaſſing upon the Reader's Patience, and detaining him too long from the Piece it ſelf. For this Reaſon I chuſe to break off here. Such Obſervations as I now leave untouch'd, merely for the Sake of Brevity, ſhall be ſcatter'd in the Notes: And if, when theſe are finiſh'd, any new Remarks of a general Nature ſhould occur to me, they will perhaps give Occaſion to a Kind of Poſtſcript, which may ſerve as a Supplement to this Epiſtolary Preface. *I am, &c.*

HAR-

HARDYKNUTE:

A FRAGMENT.

I.

STATELY ſtept he Eaſt the Wall,
And ſtately ſtept he Weſt:
Full Seventy Years he now had ſeen,
With ſcarce Sev'n Years of Reſt.
He liv'd when *Britons* Breach of Faith
Wrought *Scotland* meikle Woe:
But ay his Sword told to their Coſt
He was their deadly Foe.

Stately ſtept.] Our Author ruſhes into the Character of his principal Hero, with ſo great an Impetuoſity, that he forgets even to mention his Name for ſeveral Stanzas together. By this means he raiſes our Expectation and Curioſity to the higheſt Pitch. Had he finiſhed his Work, he might perhaps have found it neceſſary to ſet out with a Poetical Deſcription of his Subject: but, as the Poem now ſtands, I think his Way of Beginning not leſs admirable than new.

This Stanza contains a beautiful Repreſentation of an old and venerable Warrior, enjoying the Sweets and Dignity of Repoſe, after a long Life almoſt entirely ſpent in the Service of his Country.

II.

High on a Hill his Caſtle ſtood,
With Halls and Tow'rs a-height,
And goodly Chambers, fair to ſee,
Where he lodg'd many a Knight.
His Dame, ſo peerleſs once and fair
For Chaſt and Beauty deem'd,
No Marrow † had in all the Land,
Save *Eleonor* the Queen.

† Match or Equal.

III.

Full thirteen Sons to him ſhe bore,
All Men of Valour ſtout.
In bloody Fight with Sword in Hand
Nine loſt their Lives bot * doubt.
Four yet remain; long may they live
To ſtand by Liege and Land.
High was their Fame, high was their Might,
And high was their Command.

* Without.

IV.

Great Love they bore to *Fairly Fair*,
Their Siſter ſoft and dear.
Her Girdle ſhew'd her Middle jimp,
And gowden gliſt ‡ her Hair.

‡ Glitter'd.

What

Four yet remain; long may they live.] I will not pretend to juſtify this Poetical Flight of our Author. His Deſcription of *Hardyknute*'s Sons is indeed very ſolemn, but cool at the ſame time; ſo that the Reader is not enough fir'd to join with him in ſuch a daring Ejaculation.

The double Repetition of the Word *high*, in the laſt two Lines of the Stanza, has a very good Effect.

And gowden gliſt.] It would be needleſs to obſerve, that the golden Locks of *Fairly Fair* are ſuited to the Reliſh of Antiquity.

What woeful Woe her Beauty bred!
Woeful to Young and Old!
Woeful, I trow, to Kyth * and Kin,
As Story ever told!

*Blood Relations

V.

The King of *Norfe* in Summer Tide,
Puff'd up with Pow'r and Might,
Landed in fair *Scotland* the Isle
With many a hardy Knight.
The Tidings to our good *Scots* King
Came as he fat at Dine,
With Noble Chiefs in brave Array,
Drinking the blood-red Wine.

VI.

What woeful Woe.] I have already pointed at the Conclusion, which may be drawn from our Author's Exclamation here. The great Vehemence of it well deserves a Remark. It almost wholly consists in the beautiful Repetitions of a single Word, which at last acquires an incredible Emphasis. Strokes of this kind are only to be found in the best Writers. I shall cite one which occurs to me now, and which may serve as a sort of Parallel. Mr. *Pope*, in his Verses to the Memory of an unfortunate Lady, has the following Lines:

By foreign Hands thy dying Eyes were clos'd,
By foreign Hands thy decent Limbs compos'd,
By foreign Hands thy humble Grave adorn'd,
By Strangers honour'd, and by Strangers mourn'd.

The King of Norfe.] History relates, that soon after the middle of the 10th Century, *Hago* Prince of *Norway* and *Hetrick* Prince of *Denmark* invaded *Scotland* with a mighty Fleet; and, landing in the North, ravaged the Country in a furious Manner. *Indulfus* King of *Scotland*, raising an Army with great Expedition, and coming upon them almost before they were apprized of his March, gave them an entire Overthrow, but was himself killed in the Pursuit. Several Circumstances make me think that our Author had an eye to this Story.

VI.

" To Horſe, to Horſe, my Royal Liege,
" Your Foes ſtand on the Strand,
" Full twenty thouſand glittering Spears
" The King of *Norſe* commands.

* The Name of his Steed. *Bring me my Steed* Mage * *dapple grey,*
The good King roſe and cry'd.
A truſtier Beaſt in all the Land
† Try'd. *A* Scots *King never ſey'd* †.

VII.

Go, little Page, tell Hardyknute,
That lives on Hill ſo high,
To draw his Sword, the Dread of Foes,
And haſte and follow me.

The

To Horſe, to Horſe.] The Vehemence of the Action begins here. Without ſo much as inſinuating who the Perſons were that brought the News to the King of *Scotland*, our Author makes one of them burſt forth into this rapid Exhortation, this impetuous Alarm of War, *To Horſe, to Horſe.* So wonderfully ſhort and circumſtantial is the Meſſenger's Account, that he takes up but three Lines to tell the King his Enemies were landed, to point out the Number of their Forces, and to deſcribe their Arms and Country.

Full twenty thouſand glittering Spears.] Probably this Hint was taken from the following Paſſage of *Chevy Chaſe*, which reſembles the Meſſenger's Speech in ſeveral obvious Circumſtances.

Lo yonder doth Earl Douglaſs *come,*
His Men in Armour bright;
Full twenty hundred Scottiſh *Spears*
All marching in our Sight.

Bring me my Steed.] The King's ſtarting from his Seat at once, and calling for his Steed, which are the ſudden Effects of his Alarm, are deſcrib'd with no leſs Fire and Brevity than the Cauſe of it.

Go, little Page.] Having call'd for his Horſe, and, as it were, made this the Signal of his Departure, the King ends his Speech with a Meſſage to *Hardyknute*; commanding that he ſhould follow him with all poſſible Haſte. We may juſt obſerve here, that how much ſoever he depended upon *Hardyknute*'s Sword, his own martial Hurry, and the Greatneſs of his Character and Station, would not ſuffer him to ſtay for his Arrival.

The little Page flew ſwift as Dart
Flung by his Maſter's Arm.
Come down, come down, Lord Hardyknute,
And rid your King from Harm.

VIII.

Then red, red grew his dark-brown Cheeks;
So did his dark-brown Brow:
His Looks grew keen, as they were wont
In Dangers great to do.

He

The little Page flew ſwift as Dart.] This rapid Simile is ſo far from being an Obſtacle in our way, that it adds Wings to the Flight of our Imagination, as well as to the Speed of the Meſſenger; containing at the ſame time a beautiful Encomium on the Vigour of his Maſter's Arm: a Circumſtance which ſerves to ſhew the great Propriety, and our Author's lucky Choice of it.

Come down, come down.] What a deal of Matter is comprehended in the laſt four Lines of this Stanza? The Page's Speed, and the ſudden Vehemence with which he delivers his Meſſage, are not more remarkable than our Author's Impetuoſity in deſcribing them.

Then red, red grew.] No ſooner does *Hardyknute* hear of an Enemy, but inſtantly his Imagination tranſports him to the Field of Battle, and wakes the Hero in his Looks. In other Poets ſeldom any thing but the Heat of Action, and the Preſence of the Foe, can work an Effect like this. *Hector* himſelf, in the height of his Fury before the *Grecian* Fleet, while, as *Homer* deſcribes him,

——— *Beneath his gloomy Brow*
Like fiery Meteors his red Eye-balls glow.

does not wear a more dreadful Appearance than *Hardyknute*, upon his only hearing, as it were, the diſtant Sound of Arms. *Virgil*'s Horſe may ſerve in this place rather as a Simile than as a Parallel.

——*tum ſi quo ſonitum procul arma dedere,*
Stare loco neſcit: micat auribus, & tremit artus;
Collectumque premens volvit ſub naribus ignem.

He has ta'en a Horn as green as Graſs,
And giv'n five Sounds ſo ſhrill,
That Trees in *Green-wood* ſhook thereat;
So loud rung ev'ry Hill.

IX.

His Sons in manly Sport and Glee
Had paſt that Summer's Morn,
When lo, down in a graſſy Dale,
They heard their Father's Horn.
That Horn, ſaid they, *ne'er ſounds in Peace*;
We've other Sport to bide:
And ſoon they hy'd them up the Hill,
And ſoon were by his ſide.

X.

‡ Laſt Night. *Late, late yeſtreen* ‡ *I ween'd in Peace*
To end my lengthen'd Life.

My

He has ta'en.] This Tenſe, which our old *Engliſh* Poets, *Spenſer* particularly, make frequent uſe of, has a remarkable Effect in placing us near to the Action deſcrib'd.

That Trees in Green-wood *ſhook.*] The Word *ſhook* preſents us with a ſtrong Image, and is almoſt the only Mark of Diſtinction between this and the following Paſſage of *Virgil.*

——*Totuſque remugit*
Mons circum, & vocem late nemora alta remittunt.——

That Horn, ſaid they.] How ſwiftly does our Author communicate the Signal of War to *Hardyknute*'s Sons! The Reflection which they make upon their Father's Horn is truly ſublime; *That Horn ne'er ſounds in Peace.*

And ſoon they hy'd.] The very Run of the Language here has a beautiful Affinity to that Haſte with which they fly to join their Father.

Late, late yeſtreen.] The lofty Sentiments with which *Hardyknute* begins his Speech is extremely remarkable. Ambition and the Love of Glory had now ceas'd to diſturb the Tranquillity of his Age: but Zeal for his Country, that true, that everlaſting Paſſion of an Heroic Mind, continues to burn with undiminiſh'd Fierceneſs. This ſingle Motive rouzes the venerable Chief to Arms, and inſpires the hoary Patriot with a youthful Alacrity.

My Age might well excuſe my Arm
From manly Feats of Strife:
But now that Norſe *does proudly boaſt*
Fair Scotland *to inthral,*
It's † ne'er be ſaid of Hardyknute,
He fear'd to fight or fall.

† It ſhall.

XI.

Robin *of* Rothſay *bend thy Bow;*
Thine Arrows ſhoot ſo leil *,
Many a comely Countenance
They've turn'd to deadly pale.

* True to the Mark.

Brade ‡ Thomas, *take you but your Lance,*
You need no Weapons mair †,
If you fight wi't as you did once
'Gainſt Weſtmorland's *fierce Heir.*

‡ Broad.

† More.

XII.

Malcolm *light of Foot as Stag,*
That runs in Foreſt wild,
Get me my thouſands three of Men,
Well bred to Sword *and Shield.*
Get me my Horſe and Harniſhe,
My Blade of Metal clear.

C If

Robin of Rothſay bend.] It is obſervable, that while *Hardyknute*, in this and the following Stanza, directs his Speech to his Sons one after another, and rouſes their martial Fury, he praiſes their different Excellencies, Weapons and Atchievements, and thereby ſhews them what particular Services their Country expected at their hands. His animated Exhortation to the eldeſt breaks out like a ſudden Flaſh of Fire.

Many a comely Countenance.] Such is the Plainneſs of this beautiful Deſcription, that no Remark is neceſſary.

Get me my Horſe.] As *Hardyknute*'s Speech ſets every thing in Motion about him, he ſuddenly diſpatches all the neceſſary Preparations, ſo that here we find him ready to ſet out, and calling for his Horſe. In this manner does the Poet enliven the Courſe of the Action.

If Foes ken'd but the Hand it bore,
They ſoon had fled for Fear.

XIII.

Farewel, my Dame, ſo peerleſs good,
And took her by the Hand;
Fairer to me in Age you ſeem
Than Maids for Beauty fam'd:
My youngeſt Son ſhall here remain
To guard theſe ſtately Tow'rs,
And ſhut the Silver Bolt that keeps
So faſt your painted Bow'rs.

XIV.

And firſt ſhe wet her comely Cheeks,
And then her Boddice green,
Her ſilken Cords of Twirtle Twiſt,
Well plett with Silver Scheen;
And Apron ſet with many a Dice
Of Needle-work ſo rare,

Wove

If Foes ken'd but the Hand.] Our Author's Exclamation here is at beſt but a poor inelegant Paraphraſe upon what he ſays of *Hardyknute*'s Sword in a former Stanza, calling it with a nervous Brevity, *The Dread of Foes.* Methinks he ſhould not have interrupted his Hero, without giving us ſome Thought more worthy of himſelf, and of the Reader's Approbation.

Farewel my Dame.] The Domeſtic Hero ſhines in this Stanza. *Hardyknute*'s kind Diſcourſe to his Wife, the tender and affectionate Leave that he takes of her, and his Care in appointing his youngeſt Son to defend her in his Abſence, are beautiful Strokes, which add much to the Greatneſs and Dignity of his Character.

Her ſilken Cords.] A good deal of Criticiſm might be waſted in explaining theſe old-faſhion'd Ornaments of Dreſs which our Author mentions. But as I do not ſcruple to owne, that I have at preſent no more than a very confuſ'd Notion of them my ſelf; ſo, were the Caſe otherwiſe, I ſhould hardly trouble the Reader with any Deſcriptions of that kind.

Wove by no Hand, as you may gueſs,
But that of *Fairly Fair.*

XV.

And he has ridden o'er Muir * and Moſs †,
O'er Hills and many a Glen ‡,
When he came to a wounded Knight,
Making a heavy Mane ‖.
Here muſt I lie, here muſt I die,
By Treachery's falſe Guiles:
Witleſs I was that e'er gave Faith
To wicked Woman's Smiles.

XVI.

"Sir Knight, if you were in my Bow'r,
"To lean on ſilken Seat,

C 2 "My

* Heath.
† A Fen or Marſh.
‡ A Hollow between two Hills or Mountains.
‖ Moan.

Wove by no Hand.] Our Author brings in this ſhort and beautiful Encomium with ſo much Eaſe, and has ſo quickly done with it, that it looks like an unpremeditated Touch of his Hand, an extemporary Hint that ſteals from his Pen almoſt without his Knowledge. It would be needleſs to prove, that the Quality for which he celebrates *Fairly Fair*, was held in great Eſteem by the Antients.

When he came to a wounded Knight.] This Epiſode, or rather this Beginning of an Epiſode, which has no Connection with the reſt of the Piece, as Things now ſtand, evidently ſhews that our Author had a more extenſive Plan in view. It does not appear what he propos'd to make of his wounded and diſconſolate Lover; but we muſt ſurely think that in the Deſign of his Work he had cut out a neceſſary Part for him, and would, as it were, have piec'd his Adventures to the Web of the principal Story.

Witleſs I was.] Had our Author finiſh'd this Love-Story, we may gueſs, from his manner of beginning it, that it would probably have reſembled ſome of *Ariosto's* and *Taſſo's*; but, from the Judgment which he ſhews upon all other Occaſions, there is Reaſon to believe it would have contain'd leſs of wild Romance, and more of true Nature, than we generally meet with in their Poetical Fictions of Love.

Sir Knight.] This Epiſode is of no ſmall uſe in one reſpect; as it ſerves to raiſe *Hardyknute's* Compaſſion, and thereby to give us a lively Picture of his great Humanity. What he ſays to the wounded Knight, and the Concern he feels

" My Lady's kindly Care you'd prove,
" Who ne'er ken'd deadly Hate:
" Herſelf would watch you all the Day,
" Her Maids a-dead of Night,
" And *Fairly Fairy* our Heart would chear,
" As ſhe ſtands in your Sight.

XVII.

" Ariſe, young Knight, and mount your Steed,
" Full lowns † the ſhining Day;
" Chuſe from my Menzie ‡ whom you pleaſe
" To lead you on the Way."

† Declines.
‡ Retinue.

With ſmileleſs Look and Viſage wan
The wounded Knight reply'd:
Kind Chieftain, your Intent purſue,
For here I muſt abide.

XVIII.

To me no After-Day nor Night
Can e'er be ſweet and fair,
But ſoon beneath ſome dropping Tree
Cold Death ſhall end my Care.

With him no Pleading might prevail:
Brave *Hardyknute* to gain
With faireſt Words and Reaſon ſtrong,
Strove courteouſly in vain.

XIX.

feels for that unhappy Stranger, are Proofs of a Diſpoſition not leſs requiſite in the Make of a compleat Hero than Courage it ſelf. *Terence* puts the following Words in the Mouth of a plain honeſt Man; but the Sentiment is ſuch, as would have heighten'd the moſt ſublime Character in the *Iliad*:

Homo ſum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.

XIX.

Syne * he has gone far 'hind attowre †
Lord *Chattan*'s Land ſo wide:
That Lord a worthy Wight was ay
When Foes his Courage ſey'd:
Of *Pictiſh* Race by Mother's Side,
When *Picts* rul'd *Caledon*,
Lord *Chattan* claim'd the princely Maid,
When he ſav'd *Pictiſh* Crown.

* Then. † Over.

XX.

Now with his fierce and ſtalwart ‡ Train
He reach'd a riſing Height,
Where broad encamped on the Dale,
Norſe' Army lay in Sight.
Yonder, my valiant Sons and fierce,
Our raging Revers ‖ *wait,*
On the unconquer'd Scottiſh *Swaird* *
To try with us their Fate.

‡ Robuſt, Doughty.

‖ Rovers, Pirates.

* Ground, properly the Surface of the Graſs.

XX.

Make Oriſons to him that ſav'd
Our Souls upon the Rood †,

† Croſs.

Syne

Syne he has gone.] As this Stanza contains a long Encomium upon Lord *Chattan*, whoſe Name I do not remember to have found mention'd in Hiſtory, we may reaſonably conclude that our Author had ſome Tradition in his view. Such Digreſſions are frequent in *Homer*, and have doubtleſs a very good Effect in a copious Writer like him: but they do not ſuit ſo well with our Author's characteriſtic Brevity. We may therefore ſuppoſe that he did not raſhly make this Excurſion from his Subject. Perhaps he deſign'd it as a Compliment to ſome old and illuſtrious Family, which traced their Original from ſuch a *Pictiſh* Extraction.

Make Oriſons.] Our Author chuſes a proper Place and Opportunity for intimating the Devotion and Piety of his Hero. Nought but this was wanting to the Perfection of his Character.

Syne bravely ſhew your Veins are fill'd
With Caledonian *Blood.*
Then forth he drew his truſty Glaive,
While Thouſands all around,
Drawn from their Sheaths, glanſt ‖ in the Sun,
And loud the Bougils * ſound.

‖ Gleam'd.
* Horns.

XXII.

To join his King a-down the Hill
In haſte his March he made;
While playing Pibrochs † Minſtrals meet,
Before him ſtately ſtrode.
Thrice welcome, valiant Stoup ‡ of Weir ‖,
Thy Nation's Shield and Pride,
Thy King in reaſon has to fear
When thou art by his Side.

† A Name that is given to *Highland* Tunes.
‡ Pillar. ‖ War.

XXIII.

Then forth he drew.] I cannot better illuſtrate this beautiful Deſcription, than by quoting a Parallel from *Milton's Paradiſe Loſt*. *Satan's* Speech to his Infernal Legions, after he had rouz'd them from the Lake of Fire, and aſſembled them in their proper Ranks, has the ſame Effect with *Hardyknute's*, and produces a ſudden Flaſh of Swords:

He ſpake: and to confirm his Words outflew
Millions of flaming Swords drawn from the Thighs
Of mighty Cherubim; the ſudden Blaze
Far round illumin'd Hell.

Thrice welcome.] There is much Dignity in the Praiſe which the King beſtows upon *Hardyknute*; and great Fire as well as Beauty in the Metaphors which he makes uſe of, calling him the Pillar of War, and the Shield and Boaſt of his Country.

Thy King no Reaſon has to fear.] *Taſſo* furniſhes us with a Parallel to this Sentiment, in the King of *Jeruſalem's* Speech to *Clorinda*; where, among other things, he tells her, that he had no Reaſon to be afraid, now that her Sword was drawn in his Defence:

Or che s'è la tua ſpada à me congiunta,
D'ogni timor m'aſſidi, e mi conſole.

But

XXIII.

When Bows were bent and Darts were thrown,
For Throng scarce could they flie,
The Darts clove Arrows as they met,
The Arrows dart the Tree.
Long did they rage and fight full fierce
With little Skaith * to Man;
But bloody, bloody was the Field
E'er that long Day was done.

* Harm or Damage.

XXIV.

The King of *Scots* who sindle † brook'd
The War that look'd like Play,
Drew

† Seldom.

But what follows in the *Italian* Poet is no more than spinning out the same Compliment, with a Profusion of Words, that least of all befits the Character of Majesty:

Non s'essercito grande unito insieme
Fosse in mio scampo, avrei più certa speme.

When Bows were bent.] I doubt not but some Readers will be greatly pleased with this Description, though, for my part, I confess it does not strike me. The Circumstance of Darts cleaving Arrows, &c. is indeed full of Conceit, and altogether new; but it wants that Horror and Solemnity which an Image of War requires. When a Poet has once involv'd himself in the Heat of Action, he should not descend to such trifling tho' curious Incidents. How much better are the following Descriptions of *Homer* and *Virgil* upon the same Subject!

Darts show'rd on Darts now round the Caucase ring,
Now Flights of Arrows sounding from the String:
Stones follow Stones; some clatter on the Fields,
Some hard and heavy shake the sounding Shields:
Intendunt acres arcus, amentaque torquent,
Stertitur omne solum telis: tum fruta cruentat
Dant sonitum flictu galeæ——
——It toto turbida cælo
Tempestas telorum, ac ferreus ingruit imber.

This last Description is not more remarkable for its Horror than for its beautiful Conciseness.

saeuissima dicam telis, nunc feruet cælo
grandine, nec saeuis aestatibus sufficit aer.
——————————
† *consurgunt hyemes*

Drew his broad Sword, and broke his Bow,
Since Bows ſeem'd but Delay.
Quoth noble Rothſay, *mine I'll keep*;
I wot it's bleed a Score.
Haſte up, my Merrymen, cry'd the King,
As he rode on before.

XXV.

The King of *Norſe* he ſought to find,
With him to menſe * the Faught †;
But on his Forehead there did light
A ſharp unſonſy ‡ Shaft.
As he his Hand put up to find
The Wound, an Arrow keen,
O woeful Chance! there pinn'd his Hand
In midſt between his Een ‖.

XXVI.

* To decorate.
† Fight.
‡ Unlucky, ill-fated.
‖ Eyes.

The King of Scots.] The King's Conduct on this occaſion, is extremely ſuitable to the Greatneſs of his Rank and Courage. Impatient of Delay, he breaks his Bow with Scorn, and rouzes the tempeſtuous War of the Sword by his Speech and Example.

Haſte up my Merry-men.] It is obſervable that the King moves on while he ſpeaks. His Exhortation is not ſo much a Prelude to the Attack, as a Spur to the Progreſs of it.

The King of Norſe *be ſought.*] We have here a further Inſtance of his Regal Magnanimity. Diſdaining to pollute his Hands with ignoble Slaughter, he tries to find an Antagoniſt worthy of himſelf.

As he his Hand put up.] Our Author's Deſcription is too fanciful here, and preſents us with an Image that takes off from the Horror of the Thing, while it fixes our Attention not ſo much upon the mortal Effects of the Wound, as upon a ſtrange and particular Circumſtance of it. *Homer* himſelf is, I think, ſometimes guilty of the ſame Fault: but our Author ſeems to have borrow'd his Deſcription almoſt literally from a Paſſage in *Ovid's Metamorphoſes*:

——*Oppoſuit dextram paſſurus vulnera fronti:*——
Affixa eſt cum fronte manus.

As Hiſtory tells us, that *Indulfus* was kill'd with an Arrow, and ſince the King's Wound here muſt needs have proved mortal, this Circumſtance alone makes it extremely probable that our Author had *Indulfus* in his eye.

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XXVI.

Revenge, Revenge, cry'd *Rothſay*'s Heir:
Your Mail-coat ſhall nought 'bide
The Strength and Sharpneſs of my Dart:
Then ſent it thro' his Side.
Another Arrow well he mark'd,
It pierc'd his Neck in twa *,
His Hands then quit the Silver Reins,
He low as Eard † did fa'.

* Two.

† The Ground.

XXVII.

Sore bleeds my Liege, ſore, ſore he bleeds.
Again with Might he drew
And geſture dread his ſturdy Bow;
Faſt the broad Arrow flew.
Woe to the Knight he ettled ‡ at;
Lament new Queen *Elgreed*;
Hy Dames to wail your Darling's Fall,
His Youth and comely Meed.

‡ Aim'd.

* *Revenge, Revenge.*] In this and the two ſucceeding Stanzas, our Author may be ſaid to put forth the whole Strength of his Genius, and fully to diſplay the Riches of his Art. Such is the Fire of his Poetical Sentiments, ſuch his amazing Brevity, and ſuch the Boldneſs and Beauty of his Tranſitions, that here I think him altogether without a Parallel.

Sore bleeds my Liege.] *Robin* of *Rothſay*'s pathetick Soliloquy upon the deplorable Condition of his Royal Maſter, ſerves to kindle up the Rage of his Bow. His dreadful Attitude is drawn in lively Colours, and his Arrow bounds from the String with ſuch Rapidity in the Verſification, that ſcarcely could our Eyes preſent us with a more faithful Image.

Lament new Queen Elgreed.] No ſooner does our Author intimate the Fall of the Norwegian Knight, by this pathetick Exclamation, *Woe to the Knight ettled at:* but his Muſe flies acroſs the Sea, and bewails his untimely End in a ſudden Apoſtrophe to the Queen and Dames of his Country.

XXVIII.

Take off, take off his coſtly Jape
(Of Gold well was it twin'd,
Knit like the Fowler's Net, through which
His ſteely Harneſs ‖ ſhin'd.)
Take Norſe *that Gift from me, and bid*
Him venge the Blood it bears;
Say if he face my bended Bow,
No Weapon ſure he fears.

‖ Armour.

XXIX.

Proud *Norſe* with Giant Body tall,
Broad Shoulder and Arm ſtrong,
Cry'd, "Where is *Hardyknute* ſo fam'd
"And fear'd at *Britain*'s Throne.
"Tho' *Britons* tremble at his Name,
"I ſoon ſhall make him wail,
"That e'er my Sword was made ſo ſharp,
"So ſoft his Coat of Mail."

XXX.

Take off, take off.] How quick, and yet how plain, is the Tranſition from the Muſe's Lamentation over the dead Knight to *Robin* of *Rothſay*'s Triumph! The beautiful Parentheſis which our Author throws in here, is ſo far from being an unſeaſonable Interruption, that it only gives a graceful Pauſe to the Speaker, and heightens our Attention to what follows.

Take Norſe *that Gift.*] Nothing could be more ſublime than *Robin* of *Rothſay*'s calling out to the *Norwegians* in this manner, and his bidding them carry the bloody Preſent to their King, as a Token of his Defiance.

Proud Norſe.] The King of *Norway*'s Challenge to *Hardyknute*, and his boaſtful Threatning, are ſuitable to the Dignity and Fierceneſs of a great and inſolent Warrior.

XXIX.

That Brag his ſtout Heart could not bide.
It lent him youthful Might.
" I'm *Hardyknute*: this Day, *be cry'd*,
" To *Scotland's* King I height *,
" To lay thee low as Horſe's Hoof;
" My Word I mean to keep:"
Syne with the firſt Stroke that he ſtruck
He gart'd his Body bleed.

* Promis'd.

XXXI.

Norſe' Een like grey Goſe-hawks ſtar'd wild
He ſigh'd with Shame and Spite:

It lent him youthful Might.] This beautiful Effect of *Hardyknute's* Indignation preſents us with a ſtrong Image, to which I can find no direct Parallel in *Homer* or *Virgil*: but the following Paſſages may be look'd upon as bearing ſomewhat of a diſtant Reſemblance to it.

Fill'd with the God enlarg'd his Members grew,
Thro' all his Veins a ſudden Vigour flew,
The Blood in briſker Tides began to roll,
And Mars *himſelf came ruſhing on his Soul.*

Acrior ad pugnam redit, ac vim ſuſtinet iræ.
Tum pudor incendit vires, & conſcia virtus.

To lay thee low.] Such an Expreſſion is very fit to be made uſe of in the Field of Battle.

Syne with the firſt Stroke.] No Fault can reaſonably be found with the Sentiment in this Place, but the Verſification is extremely poor.

Norſe' Een like grey Goſe-hawks ſtar'd wild.] There is a peculiar Aptneſs in the Sound of the Words here, to give us a lively Notion of the Thing deſcrib'd. I ſhall quote a Parallel from *Dryden*:

And amaz'd he ſtares around.

To the ſame purpoſe is that celebrated Expreſſion which *Virgil* makes uſe of, *Phrygia agmina circumſpexit.*

He ſigh'd with Shame.] *Satan's* Behaviour upon the Foil which he receiv'd in a ſingle Combat, may be look'd upon as a direct Parallel to the King of *Norway's*

" Diſgrac'd is now my far-fam'd Arm,
" That left thee Pow'r to ſtrike.
Then gave his Head a Blow ſo fell
It made him down to ſtoop
As low as he to Ladies us'd
In courtly Guiſe to loot *.

* To bow.

XXXII.

Full ſoon he rais'd his bent Body,
His Bow he marvell'd ſair †,
Since Blows till then on him but dar'd
As 'Touch of *Fairly Fair*.
Norſe ferly'd ‡ too as much as he
To ſee his ſtately Look:

† Sore.

‡ Wonder'd.

So

Norway's here. How beautifully does *Milton* repreſent his infernal Hero:

Gnaſhing with Anguiſh, and Deſpite, and Shame,
To find himſelf not matchleſs, and his Pride
Humbled by ſuch Rebuke! ———

It muſt nevertheleſs be own'd, that the Speech which our Author puts into the Mouth of his Warrior, animates the Thing above the Powr of mere Deſcription.

As low as he to Ladies.] Our Author's Deſcription here would have done very well in a Mock Poem, but is altogether unſuitable to the lofty Strain of *Hardyknute*.

Full ſoon he rais'd.] It is with great Unwillingneſs that I enter upon this Stanza, becauſe it affords me little room for Praiſe, and much for Cenſure. There is a remarkable Poorneſs as well in the Thoughts as in the Verſification of the firſt four Lines; and afterwards when the Sentiment riſes, ſuch is our Author's inaccurate Brevity, that we do not eaſily comprehend his Meaning. I confeſs it was ſome time before I diſcover'd, that in the laſt two Lines of the Stanza he was ſpeaking of the King of *Norway*, and not of *Hardyknute*; ſo that I had well-nigh cenſur'd him for breaking off their Fight in a moſt abrupt and unaccountable Manner, and was going to ſay, that if he reſerv'd the King of *Norway* for any other Purpoſe in his Poem, he ſhould at leaſt have parted them with Decency.

So ſoon as e'er he ſtruck a Foe,
So ſoon his Life he took.

XXXIII.

Where like a Fire to Heather * ſet
Bold *Thomas* did advance,
A ſturdy Foe with Look enrag'd
Up towards him did prance.
He ſpur'd his Steed thro' thickeſt Ranks
The hardy Youth to quell,
Who ſtood unmus'd ‡ at his approach
His Fury to repel.

* Heath.

‡ Undiſturb'd.

XXXIV.

That ſhort brown Shaft ſo meanly trim'd
Looks like poor Scotland's *Gear* †,
But dreadful ſeems the ruſty point!
And loud he laugh'd in jeer.

† Wealth.

Oft

So ſoon as e'er he ſtruck.] Doubtleſs this, when apply'd to the Knight of *Norway*, is extremely proper and well-tim'd, ſince it not only repreſents him as a dreadful Warrior, but likewiſe naturally accounts for his being ſurpriz'd at *Hardyknute*'s not ſinking under the weight of his Blow.

We may remark in general, that this and the two preceding Stanzas are the leaſt perfect of any in the whole Poem. They contain maſterly Strokes indeed; but with theſe there is an uncommon Mixture of Faults. As the Combat between *Hardyknute* and the King of *Norway* could not but raiſe our Expectation to the higheſt pitch, it certainly requir'd the laſt Effort of the Muſe. From hence I infer, that our Author's Deſcription of the thing is no more than a rude and unfiniſh'd Sketch of what he propos'd to make it. There is no Reaſon to doubt, that he deſign'd *Hardyknute* ſhould kill the King of *Norway*.

That ſhort brown Shaft.] The Sarcaſtic Speech of the *Norwegian* Knight is ſurely not inferior to any that we meet with in *Homer* or *Virgil*. His loud Laughteron this occaſion ſhews a wonderful Unconcern and Preſence of Mind in the Field of Battle. But nothing comes up to that ſublime and heroic Anſwer which his contemptuous Sneer upon the ruſty Point of his Adverſary's Weapon produces.

Oft Briton's *Blood has dim'd it's Shine;*
This Point out ſhorn their Vaunt,
Syne pierc'd the Boaſter's bearded Cheek;
* No Time he took to taunt ‡.

‡ To jeer.

XXXV.

Short while he in his Saddle ſwung,
His Stirrup was no Stay,
So feeble hung his unbent Knee:
Sure Taken he was fey.
Swith † on the harden'd Clay he fell;
Right far was heard the Thud.
But *Thomas* look'd not as he lay
All welt'ring in his Blood.

† Swiftly.

With

No Time he took.] We find a parallel Circumſtance in the Behaviour of *Æneas*, when attack'd by two Brothers, one of whom had menaced him in a boaſtful Strain.

——*Sed non & Troius Heros*
Dicta parat contrà: jaculum nam torquet in hoſtes.

Sure Taken he was fey.] A vulgar Phraſe in *Scotland*, which for that Reaſon our Author ought not to have made uſe of. But perhaps it was leſs common in his Time. A Man is ſaid to be *taken fey*, when ſome great Misfortune is juſt ready to fall upon him.

Right far was heard the Thud.] The laſt Word here is perhaps the luckieſt in point of Sound, that any Language affords, for expreſſing the Noiſe of ſuch a Fall as our Author deſcribes in this Place. It ſeems alone to produce the ſame Effect upon the Ear as the following Complication of Words in *Virgil*.

Fit ſonus, ingenti concuſſa eſt pondere tellus.

But Thomas *look'd not.*] By the Magnanimity which our young Hero ſhews on this occaſion, he gets the ſtart of *Virgil*'s *pius Æneas*, who no ſooner kills one of the Brothers, but he breaks forth into the following bitter Irony.

Iacuge, nulla tuos effugit fuga ſagnis equorum
Prodidit, aut vanæ vertere ex hoſtibus umbræ.
Ipſe rotis ſaliens juga deſeris.

XXXVI.

With careleſs Geſture, Mind unmov'd
On rid he North the Plain
His Seem in Throng of fierceſt Strife,
When Winner, ay the ſame.
Nor yet his Heart Darne's dimpled Cheek
‡ Move. Could meiſe ‡ ſoft Love to brook,
Till vengeful *Mars* return'd his Scorn,
Then languid grew his Look.

XXXVII.

† Pale, wan. In Throws of Death with wallow'd † Cheek,
All panting on the Plain,
The fainting Corps of Warriors lay,
Ne'er to ariſe again:
Ne'er to return to native Land,
* Joyful. No more with blythſome * ſounds
To boaſt the Glories of the Day
And ſhew their ſhining Wounds.

With careleſs Geſture.] This ſerene and heroic Tranquillity which *Thomas* diſplays in the Heat and Turbulence of Action, gives a ſtrong Mark of Diſtinction to his Character.

Nor yet his Heart.] So great was the Compoſure of his Mind, that only the mighty Paſſion of Love, after having long attack'd him in vain, could ruffle it at laſt. I take this to be our Author's Meaning.

In Throws of Death.] How wonderfully ſolemn is our Author's Deſcription of the Field of Battle, and of the melancholy Scene which the Rage and Havoc of the Sword had produc'd. The miſerable Effects of War are ſet forth in all their dreadful Circumſtances, ſuch as naturally raiſe Terror and Compaſſion in the human Mind. But nothing, except what follows in the next Stanza, could have ſurpaſs'd the Muſe's pathetical Lamentation over the ſlaughter'd Hoſt of the *Norwegians*.

XXXVIII.

On *Norway*'s Coaſt the widow'd Dame
May waſh the Rocks with Tears,
May long look o'er the Shipleſs Seas
Before her Mate appears.
Ceaſe, *Emma*, ceaſe to hope in vain;
Thy Lord lies in the Clay:
The valiant *Scots* no Revers thole
To carry Life away.

XXXIX.

There on a Plain where ſtands a Croſs.
Set up for Monument,
Thouſands full fierce that Summer's Day
Fill'd keen War's black Intent.
Let *Scots*, while *Scots*, praiſe *Hardyknute*,
Let *Norſe* his Name ay dread.
Ay how he fought, oft how he ſpar'd
Shall lateſt Ages read.

On Norway's *Coaſt.*] The Circumſtances in which our Author repreſents the Widows of the Slain, are mournful to the laſt degree; and the Verſification is extremely ſuitable to the Sentiments. Some fainter Images of this kind are to be met with in other Poets; but his beautiful Apoſtrophe to *Emma*, that ſudden and fiery Touch of his Muſe, is altogether without an Example. In ſhort, we may truly ſay, that this and the preceding Stanza contain a more animated and finiſh'd Picture than is any where elſe to be found upon the ſame Subject. What comes the neareſt to a Parallel is the following Deſcription in *Chevy-Chaſe*:

Next Day did many Widows come
Their Husbands to bewail:
They waſh'd their Wounds in briniſh Tears,
But all would not prevail.
Their Bodies bath'd in Purple Blood
They bore with them away.
They kiſs'd them dead a thouſand times,
When they were clad in Clay.

XL.

Loud and chill blew the Weſtlin Wind,
Sore bear the heavy Show'r;
‡ Dark. Mirk ‡ grew the Night e'er *Hardyknute*
Won near his ſtately Tow'r.
His Tow'r that us'd with Torches Blaze
To ſhine ſo far at Night,
Seem'd now as black as mourning Weed;
No Marvel ſore he ſigh'd.

XLI.

There's no Light in my Lady's Bow'r,
There's no Light in my Hall;
† Glimpſe. No Blink † ſhines round my *Fairly Fair*,
Nor Ward ſtands on my Wall.

E What

Loud and chill blew.] From this and what follows to the End of the Poem, it appears evidently that our Author was but juſt coming to the principal Part of his Subject. His Deſcription of the War againſt the *Norwegians* is doubtleſs exceedingly proper, as it ſerves to make us acquainted with the great Virtues and the wonderful Worth of *Hardyknute*. After this no real Misfortune could befall him, without deeply touching us; whereas, had the Poet begun with the Rape of *Fairly Fair*, it would not have mov'd half that Terror and Compaſſion which it does now. We may likewiſe obſerve that our Hero's Abſence in the War, is judiciouſly contriv'd to make room for ſuch a bold Attack upon his Family.

His Tow'r.] The Circumſtance which alarms the Fear of *Hardyknute*, is exquiſitely ſolemn and dreadful; and finely does our Author prepare us for it, by thoſe awful Images of Nature which he crowds into the foregoing Part of the Stanza. But Beauties like theſe muſt neceſſarily ſtrike every Reader; for which Reaſon it is almoſt ſuperfluous to point them out.

There's no Light.] *Hardyknute*'s Speech repreſents in a lively manner to us, the Cauſe, Beginning, and Progreſs of his Amazement and Fears. The mournful Tone of Language which prevails in the firſt four Lines of it, obliges us to dwell upon thoſe diſmal Appearances that ſtrike his Imagination, and conſequently paves the Way for that Extremity of Horror which breaks out afterwards.

"*What bodes it? Robert, Thomas* ſay."
No Anſwer fits their Dread.
"Stand back my Sons, I'll be your Guide:"
But by they paſt with ſpeed.

XLII.

"As faſt I've ſped o'er *Scotland's* Foes" —
There ceas'd his Brag of Weir;
Sore 'ſham'd to mind ought but his Dame
And Maiden *Fairly Fair.*
Black Fear he felt, but what to fear
He wiſt not yet with Dread;
Sore ſhook his Body, ſore his Limbs,
And all the Warrior fled.

What bodes it? Robert, Thomas, ſay.] Our Author ſoars above all Example here, and at once o'erwhelms the Reader and the Critic with the ſudden Vehemence of the Action. The lamentable Queſtion which *Hardyknute* puts to his two Sons, *Robert* and *Thomas*, requiring an immediate Anſwer from both, their dreadful Silence, his Speech upon the back of that, and their Behaviour in Conſequence of his Speech; all this in four Lines! There's no withſtanding ſuch a rapid and fiery Succeſſion of Images.

As faſt I've ſped.] In this Soliloquy *Hardyknute* laments the Misfortune of his old Age, which hinders him from equalling the ſpeed of his two Sons. His reflecting on the paſt Vigour of his Youth, at a time when he had moſt of all occaſion for it, is extremely natural: but our Author very judiciouſly cuts him ſhort, and fills his Mind with nothing but hideous Apprehenſions.

Black Fear he felt.] This latter Part of the Stanza preſents us with a Scene of vaſt Tenderneſs, Anxiety and Horror. Incapable of Fear on his own account, *Hardyknute* trembles for his Family; and the Warrior, though not the Hero, is loſt in the Father and the Husband.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

AFTER what has been ſaid in the Notes and general Remarks upon *Hardyknute*, I hope I need make no Excuſe for calling it the Firſt Canto of an Epic Poem. If we conſider it as ſuch, we ſhall find that it could not end in a more beautiful way. The dreadful Uncertainty in which our Author leaves us, with regard to his Hero's Family, raiſes our Curioſity to the higheſt pitch; and whets our Appetite for the ſucceeding Canto, where it behov'd him to reveal that Myſtery of Horror.

It remains that I ſhould ſpeak a little of our Author's Subject, as far as it relates to Hiſtory. The Name or Title of *Hardyknute*, which he gives to the Hero of his Poem, is not to be met with: but we find two Stories, that, in ſeveral Circumſtances, reſemble the Action he deſcribes. I have already mention'd one of them in the Note upon the fifth Stanza, and ſhall now give a ſhort Account of the other. Nothing after the Middle of the Thirteenth Century, during the Reign of *Alexander* III. *Acho*, King of *Norway*, landed in *Scotland* with an Army of 20000 Men. Our Author ſeems to copy this literally.

Full twenty thouſand glitt'ring Spears
The King of North commands.

The *Scotch*, under the Command of *Alexander Stuart*, Great Grandfather to the Firſt King of [illegible], gave the *Norwegians* an entire Defeat, and kill'd 16000 in the Field of Battle. Moſt of the reſt periſh'd in a Storm; and *Acho*, their King, eſcaping with a ſmall Number to the *Orkneys*, died of Grief ſoon after. *Buchanan* tells us, that, next to the Loſs of his Army, the thing that moſt afflicted him was the Death of a brave young Man, his Relation. Perhaps the following Lines allude to this:

Lament now Queen Elgreed;
Hy Dames to wail your Darling's Fall,
His Youth and comely Meed.

But

But though our Author may ſeem to borrow ſome Circumſtances from this Story, we have reaſon to think that he had the other chiefly in view. According to moſt Hiſtorians *Alexander* III. was not ſo much as preſent in the Battle, whereas our Author's King receives a mortal Wound there. The remarkable Expedition with which *Indulfus* march'd againſt the Foe, is another Circumſtance that he copies. To this we may add that *Graham* and *Dunbar*, whom Hiſtory deſcribes as coming up with their Troops in the Middle of the Engagement, ſeem not to have ſet out with the King, like *Hardyknute*, to have follow'd him by ſpeedy Marches. If theſe Things are well attended to, they will incline us to believe that *Graham* is the ſame with *Hardyknute*; whatever may have induc'd the Poet to diſguiſe him under a fictitious Title. It would be needleſs to commend his Choice of ſuch a Heroe, who was himſelf greatly diſtinguiſh'd on that Occaſion, and whoſe Family has produc'd ſome of the moſt eminent Warriors in Hiſtory.

To a Son of that Noble Family, the Author of theſe Remarks, begs leave to Inſcribe this Martial Poem; To him, whoſe Province is War, and in whom the World expects another *Hardyknute*, upon a more Illuſtrious Theatre, the Sea.